

Audio Podcast Script
Communication Plans Revisited
Julia Koppich, Rob Meyers, Cindy Prince

Successful Communication Strategies
Julia Koppich

Interviewer: This is Cortney Rowland with the Center for Educator Compensation Reform and I'm joined by Julie Koppich. Julie is a member of the Technical Assistance team for CECR and is a specialist in communications and stakeholder outreach.

Interviewer: Julie, you just finished presenting your session on Successful Communication Strategies to help grantees rethink their communications plan. Would you start by talking a little about some of the keys to a successful communications plan?

Julie: I think among the keys to a successful communication plan, is having a set of strategies that connect the message the grantee wants to convey with a variety of audiences including teachers, administrators, the media and the public. Whatever message the grantee wants to convey must be very clear and it needs to be repeated frequently. Stakeholders need a constant reminder about why the district or the state is implementing a new teacher pay system and what the goals of that system are.

Interviewer: In the session you discussed two examples of districts that implemented communications plans. Listeners can find your complete presentation on the CECR website on the Events page. What should grantees take away from these experiences as being essential to a successful communications strategy?

Julie: In both the Austin and Minneapolis examples, the communications involved outreach to schools, teachers and principals; creating a feedback loop for teachers, administrators and other participants to ask questions; and meeting and communicating with stakeholders to keep them informed about the program's progress.

In the Austin example, the district created a detailed written communications plan that included timelines, delivery methods, strategies, accountability, and deadlines. It also outlined activities to use to engage and inform all of the interested parties. In addition, it included a plan describing how to roll out, then conduct, the initial payouts to teachers and administrators.

This allowed Austin to present a very well organized and extensive campaign to inform participants and stakeholders. For Minneapolis, while the district—in the form of a teacher on special assignment—did an effective job in communicating with stakeholders, the biggest drawback that organizers there cited was the lack of a written communications plan. The district did communicate well with stakeholders, but they never set to writing the strategies, deadlines and responsibilities for what was needed in order to successfully implement a communications plan around their new compensation system. So again, I think that among the most important things to remember is frequent communication in multiple formats is absolutely key: it allows you to shape the message about your particular program.

Interviewer: Julie thanks so much for talking with us today. You can find the complete PowerPoint presentation from Julie's session "Communication Plans Revisited: Successful Communication Strategies" on the CECR website under Events. Select the 2009 Annual Grantee Meeting.